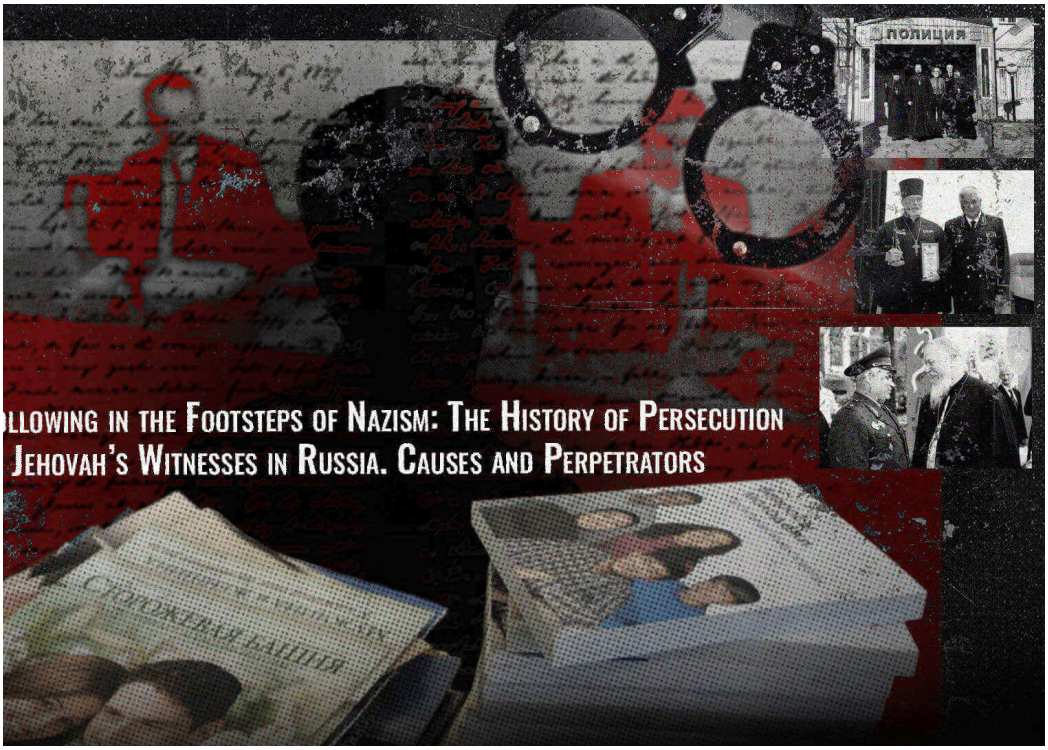

ПОЛИЦИЯ
LLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF NAZISM: THE HISTORY OF PERSECUTION
JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN RUSSIA. CAUSES AND PERPETRATORS

ARTICLES

The History Persecution Jehovah's Witnesses i Russia. Cau and Perpetr

March 2, 2025 · 25 mins read

Jehovah's Witnesses are a peaceful, nonviolent organization whose ideals are rooted in faith in God and adherence to His commandments as written in the Bible. Throughout their existence, they have maintained a position of neutrality on any issue related to war, authority, and violence — stances that naturally clash with totalitarian regimes and anti-democratic forces. Because of their faith, they refused to bow to Hitler, take up arms, or kill. Consequently, between 1933 and 1945, according to various sources, approximately 10,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany fell victim to Nazism.

In the spring of 1945, the inmates of the Third Reich's concentration camps, including many Jehovah's Witnesses, were liberated by Soviet soldiers. Nazism was defeated, and it seemed the world would never allow such horrors to happen again.

Seventy-two years later, in the spring of 2017, the Supreme Court of Russia — the successor state of the former USSR, which had defeated Nazism — approved the liquidation and banning of the activities of the Jehovah's Witnesses organization. Once again, followers of this faith found themselves in prisons, subjected to torture, and confronted with hatred cultivated over the preceding decades.

This court ruling to ban the organization was not the start of the brutal persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses but its logical continuation, stemming from years of propaganda from anticultists and modern-day opponents of so-called sects and cults. The hatred directed at Jehovah's Witnesses and the ostracism faced by this religious group had been systematically cultivated for over 30 years by anticultists united under the Russian pro-religious organization RACIRS.

Back then in Germany, hatred toward certain groups, including Jews and Jehovah's Witnesses, was also artificially created through propaganda and dehumanization by the ideologists of the Apologetic Center, which focused on combating sects. This center was led by anti-Semite and theologian Walter Künneth.

Remarkably, modern anticultists, led by Alexander Dvorkin, who, just like the Nazis, are dehumanizing Jehovah's Witnesses and discrediting any groups they label as "sects" or "cults," are not merely imitators but direct successors of Nazi ideologists. The transmission of Nazi knowledge and methods has never ceased, carried along the succession line from Walter Künneth to Friedrich-Wilhelm Haack and Johannes Aagaard to Alexander Dvorkin.

In Germany, the Apologetic Center closely collaborated with the Gestapo, providing state police with lists of undesirable individuals and other necessary data. In Russia, leaders of the anticult movement similarly cooperate with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and special services, deliver lectures to the military,

issue “expert opinions,” advise law enforcement agencies, supply them with materials and lists of undesirables (which grow annually), and forensic religious examinations.

Below are photos of meetings and lectures involving RACIRS President Alexander Dvorkin, RACIRS Vice President Archpriest Alexander Novopashin, and RACIRS member Archpriest Dmitry Smirnov with law enforcement officials.

EXPOSING ANTI CULT
TERRORISM

EXPOSING ANTI CULT
TERRORISM

Perhaps this very succession of the Nazi methods explains another striking similarity in the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses under both regimes. Jehovah's Witnesses were among the first groups targeted by the totalitarian regime of Hitler's Germany and one of the first to be repressed and sent to Nazi camps and prisons. Similarly, in modern Russia, Jehovah's Witnesses were

the first religious organization to be officially banned, with their followers subjected to a wave of violence, repression, and torture.

In light of the extreme inhumanity observed among those carrying out repressions in Russia and applying torture against members of peaceful, law-abiding organizations like Jehovah's Witnesses, who are part of their own country's population, it is crucial to examine the phenomenon of 'dehumanization.'

The Nazi Method of Dehumanization

The extent and scale of Nazi atrocities, including genocide against various peoples and undesirable groups, are well known. However, such crimes against humanity and individuals are only possible after the future victims have been dehumanized in the eyes of society.

Dehumanization is the key factor that legitimizes cruelty, violence, and torture. It influences state decisions that launch the flywheel of repression and destroy the rights of certain groups. It is dehumanization that leads to a shift in societal values, manifesting in unrestrained hatred, hyperfixation, and ultimately hysteria in a huge part of society toward artificially stigmatized groups. As a result, victims of dehumanization come to be seen as "subhuman" in the eyes of society and find themselves outside the social boundaries where moral considerations, concepts of justice, human dignity, and respect no longer apply.

One critical component of dehumanization is the use of stigmatizing labels. In Hitler's Germany, Jehovah's Witnesses were considered a particularly dangerous category of prisoners in concentration camps and were marked with purple triangles on their clothing. It was a way of dehumanization, a form of stigmatization, akin to the "yellow stars" used to dehumanize Jews. Stigmatization has always been a feature of totalitarian regimes, playing a

crucial role in suppressing freedom and human rights. Unlike in the past, in the modern information age, the process of stigmatizing groups primarily relies on pejorative terms, dehumanizing labels, including such terms as “sect” and “cult.” This particular Nazi method of dehumanization is actively employed by anticultists today.

Image from the official website of Jehovah’s Witnesses (jw.org) [1]. Image from The Holocaust Explained website, The Wiener Holocaust Library [2]

Below are several examples (among many) of dehumanization carried out by the leading successor of Nazi ideologues and the leader of modern anticultism, Alexander Dvorkin, against Jehovah’s Witnesses and other organizations:

Excerpted from the book «Freedom of Religion or Belief. Anti-Sect Movements and State Neutrality. A Case Study: FECRIS» [3]:

«9 October 2009, NTV channel: Emergency, Investigation: Jehovah’s Witnesses, TV show.

Before the whole country, Dvorkin in his interview to NTV paralleled Jehovah’s Witnesses with drug dealers and called them “slaves”. Thereafter the

documentary was repeatedly used as a motive for violence against Jehovah's Witnesses.

16 May 2010, Russia 1 TV Channel, Special Correspondent, TV show

Dvorkin said to all of Russia that sects have to be fought at the government level and that the literature of sects has to be declared extremist. He also stated that more dangerous than Satanists ("who are an obvious evil") are Mormons, Hare Krishna, New Pentecostals, Falun Gong, and Jehovists, who "conceal evil under the guise of good".

24 May 2010, NTV Channel, Honest Monday, TV show

Dvorkin urged people to get organized and oppose the threat of sects. He expressed his hope that the court decisions declaring the literature of Jehovah's Witnesses and Scientologists to be extremist would remain in force».

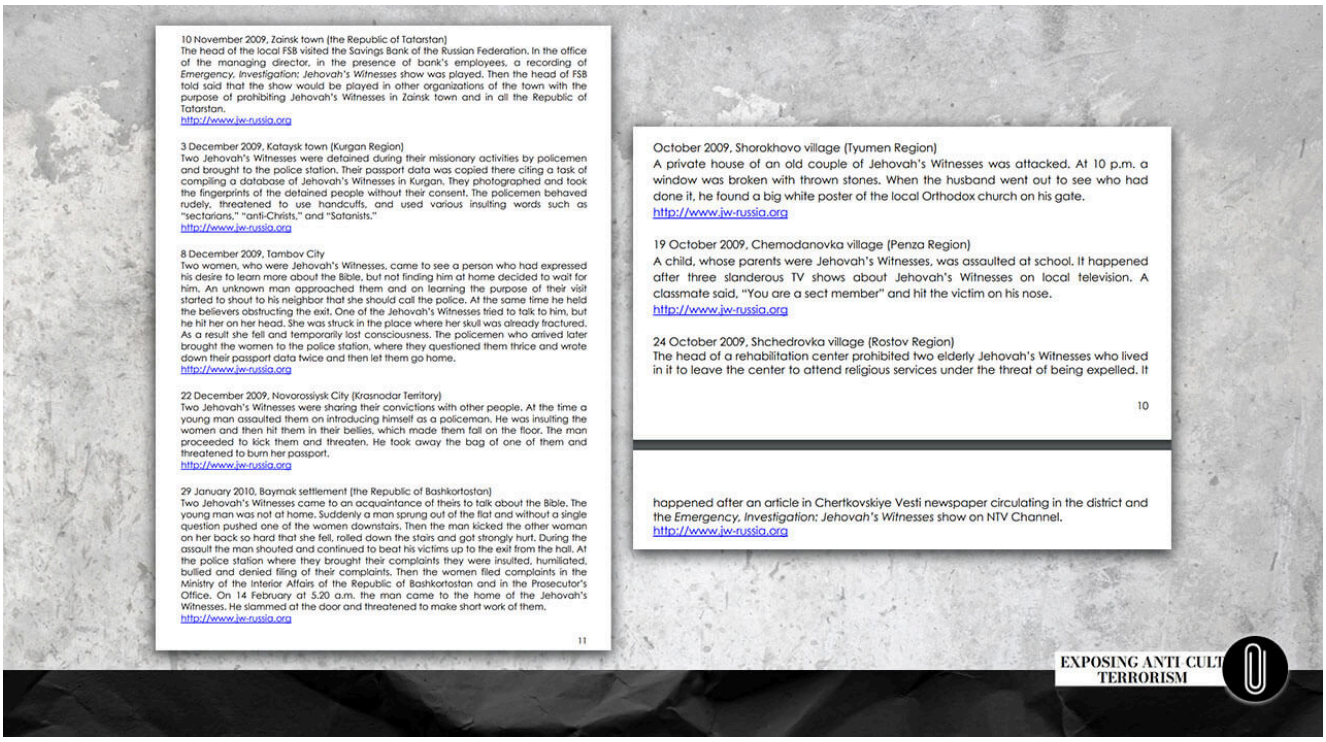
Excerpted from the article: «RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM OF ALEXANDER DVORKIN. Research Article. November 2010» [4]:

«24 March 2010, Mirny City (Yakutia)
During his meeting with the public Alexander Dvorkin dwelt on the topic "The Sect and Children." He gave facts on the destructive sects collected all over the world. He told about such organizations as the Power of Faith, Jehovah"s Witnesses, the Society for the Consciousness of Krishna, the Family, and Scientology. Alexander Dvorkin stressed that, "We all need knowledge on new sects, New Pentecostal sects, as their adepts recruit failed university enrollees, and people on vacation, they have a whole battery of psychological influence, especially on the unstable minds of adolescents and youths..." Alexander Dvorkin noted that population"s initiative should be present in fighting sects to force local authorities to react quickly to them».

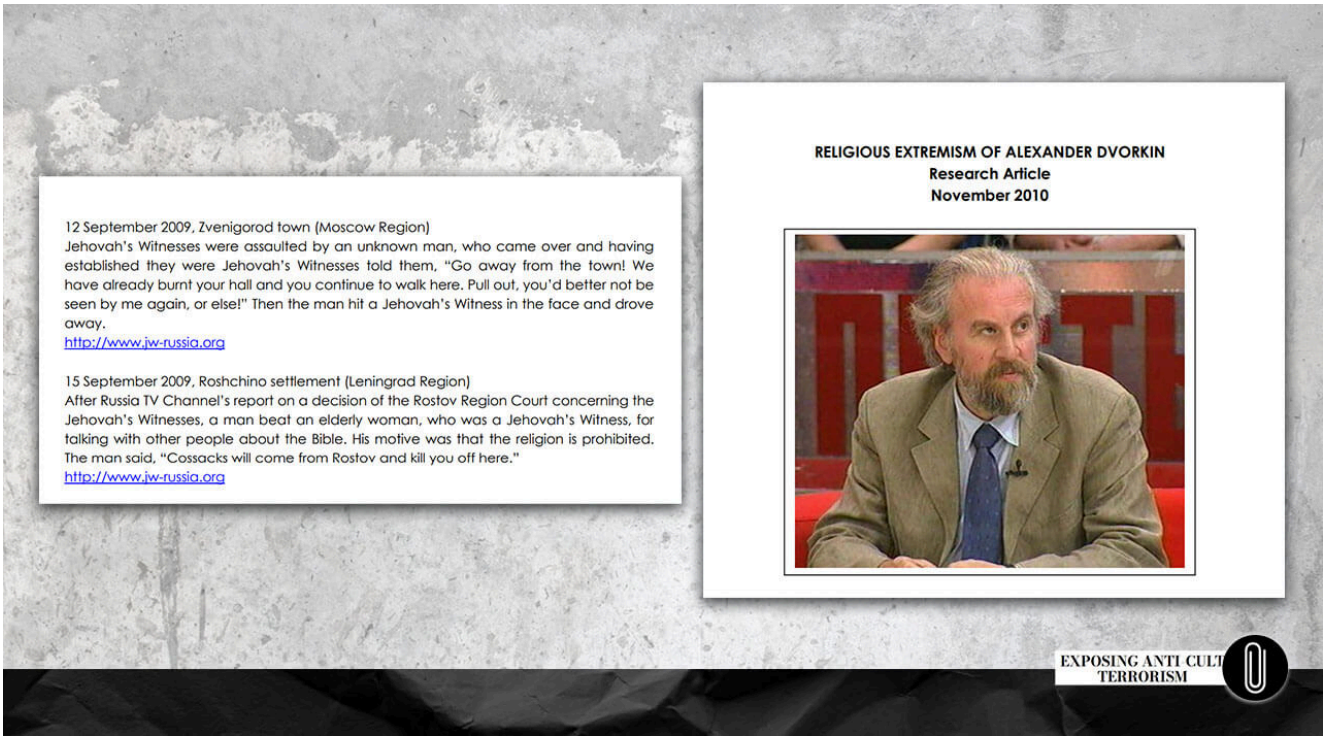
As a result of decades of discreditation and dehumanization, Jehovah's Witnesses have repeatedly faced violence, both from law enforcement agencies and civilians. Such hatred from ordinary civilians has been especially apparent in those regions of Russia and neighboring countries where anticult players had previously been active in the media. This included speeches, lectures, or meetings — either by Dvorkin or his associates — aimed at warning locals about the alleged "threat of totalitarian sects," listing Jehovah's Witnesses one of the first in their target list. This propaganda could also be in the form of a TV or radio program featuring Alexander Dvorkin, a newspaper article, or verbal warnings spread among parishioners of local Orthodox churches.

Violence has ranged from physical attacks to vandalism, arson of cars and buildings (sometimes with people inside), and systematic psychological abuse, including threats and insults directed at Jehovah's Witnesses. The period from 2009 to 2010 was particularly notable in this regard. The research article "Religious Extremism of Alexander Dvorkin. Research Article. November 2010" [4] clearly demonstrates the correlation between Dvorkin's speeches in different regions of Russia and the subsequent increase in incidents of religious intolerance among the civilian population of these regions, attacks on Jehovah's Witnesses, and the use of physical and psychological violence.

Below is just a small portion of incidents of religious intolerance against Jehovah's Witnesses from that period, as documented in the article "Religious Extremism of Alexander Dvorkin."


10 November 2009, Zainsk town (the Republic of Tatarstan)
The head of the local FSB visited the Savings Bank of the Russian Federation. In the office of the managing director, in the presence of bank's employees, a recording of Emergency. Investigation: Jehovah's Witnesses show was played. Then the head of FSB told said that the show would be played in other organizations of the town with the purpose of prohibiting Jehovah's Witnesses in Zainsk town and in all the Republic of Tatarstan.
http://www.jw-russia.org
3 December 2009, Kataysk town (Kurgan Region)
Two Jehovah's Witnesses were detained during their missionary activities by policemen and brought to the police station. Their passport data was copied there citing a task of compiling a database of Jehovah's Witnesses in Kurgan. They photographed and took the fingerprints of the detained people without their consent. The policemen behaved rudely, threatened to use handcuffs, and used various insulting words such as "sectarians," "anti-Christs," and "Satanists."
http://www.jw-russia.org
8 December 2009, Tambov City
Two women, who were Jehovah's Witnesses, came to see a person who had expressed his desire to learn more about the Bible, but not finding him at home decided to wait for him. An unknown man approached them and on learning the purpose of their visit started to shout to his neighbor that she should call the police. At the same time he held the believers obstructing the exit. One of the Jehovah's Witnesses tried to talk to him, but he hit her on her head. She was struck in the place where her skull was already fractured. As a result she fell and temporarily lost consciousness. The policemen who arrived later brought the women to the police station, where they questioned them thrice and wrote down their passport data twice and then let them go home.
http://www.jw-russia.org
22 December 2009, Novorossiysk City (Krasnodar Territory)
Two Jehovah's Witnesses were sharing their convictions with other people. At the time a young man assaulted them on introducing himself as a policeman. He was insulting the women and then hit them in their bellies, which made them fall on the floor. The man proceeded to kick them and threaten. He took away the bag of one of them and threatened to burn her passport.
http://www.jw-russia.org
29 January 2010, Baymak settlement (the Republic of Bashkortostan)
Two Jehovah's Witnesses came to an acquaintance of theirs to talk about the Bible. The young man was not at home. Suddenly a man sprung out of the flat and without a single question pushed one of the women downstairs. Then the man kicked the other woman on her back so hard that she fell, rolled down the stairs and got strongly hurt. During the assault the man shouted and continued to beat his victims up to the exit from the hall. At the police station where they brought their complaints they were insulted, humiliated, bullied and denied filing of their complaints. Then the women filed complaints in the Ministry of the Interior Affairs of the Republic of Bashkortostan and in the Prosecutor's Office. On 14 February at 5.20 a.m. the man came to the home of the Jehovah's Witnesses. He slammed at the door and threatened to make short work of them.
http://www.jw-russia.org
11
October 2009, Shorokhovo village (Tyumen Region)
A private house of an old couple of Jehovah's Witnesses was attacked. At 10 p.m. a window was broken with thrown stones. When the husband went out to see who had done it, he found a big white poster of the local Orthodox church on his gate.
http://www.jw-russia.org
19 October 2009, Chemodanovka village (Penza Region)
A child, whose parents were Jehovah's Witnesses, was assaulted at school. It happened after three slanderous TV shows about Jehovah's Witnesses on local television. A classmate said, "You are a sect member" and hit the victim on his nose.
http://www.jw-russia.org
24 October 2009, Shchedrovka village (Rostov Region)
The head of a rehabilitation center prohibited two elderly Jehovah's Witnesses who lived in it to leave the center to attend religious services under the threat of being expelled. It
10
happened after an article in Chertkovskiye Vesti newspaper circulating in the district and the Emergency. Investigation: Jehovah's Witnesses show on NTV Channel.
http://www.jw-russia.org
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

Screenshots from the sectes-info.com website [4]


12 September 2009, Zvenigorod town (Moscow Region)
Jehovah's Witnesses were assaulted by an unknown man, who came over and having established they were Jehovah's Witnesses told them, "Go away from the town! We have already burnt your hall and you continue to walk here. Pull out, you'd better not be seen by me again, or else!" Then the man hit a Jehovah's Witness in the face and drove away.
http://www.jw-russia.org
15 September 2009, Roshchino settlement (Leningrad Region)
After Russia TV Channel's report on a decision of the Rostov Region Court concerning the Jehovah's Witnesses, a man beat an elderly woman, who was a Jehovah's Witness, for talking with other people about the Bible. His motive was that the religion is prohibited. The man said, "Cossacks will come from Rostov and kill you off here."
http://www.jw-russia.org
RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM OF ALEXANDER DVORKIN
Research Article
November 2010
EXPOSING ANTI CULT TERRORISM

Screenshots from the sectes-info.com website [4]

Additional information can be found in the article mentioned above, as well as in the book "Freedom of Religion or Belief. Anti-Sect Movements and State Neutrality. A Case Study: FECRIS," which was prepared by prominent scholars

and legal experts from five European countries [3]. The brutal persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses was previously detailed in "The IMPACT" documentary.

Starting in 2009 and beyond, anticult players and their accomplices increasingly moved to the federal level, securing and leading key positions in central executive and judicial authorities, as well as in legislative structures, where they assumed influential roles. Additionally, in 2009, Alexander Dvorkin became vice president of the European umbrella anticult federation FECRIS, which unites dozens of anticult associations from various countries, and intensified the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses on an international scale.

The Trace of Alexander Dvorkin and the Russian Ministry of Justice in the Subsequent Repressions Against Jehovah's Witnesses

The active discrediting and dehumanization of Jehovah's Witnesses, followed by their proscription in Russia, clearly bears the mark of the Expert Council on State Religious Evaluation under the Russian Ministry of Justice. In 2009, Alexander Dvorkin became its head, and alongside him, other representatives of RACIRS joined the council.

Moreover, Alexander Dvorkin has long enjoyed the support of former Russian Minister of Justice Alexander Konovalov, who held the position from May 12, 2008, to January 15, 2020. Notably, the ban on Jehovah's Witnesses took place in the spring of 2017, precisely under his leadership at the Ministry of Justice. Alexander Konovalov was once a student at Saint Tikhon's Orthodox University of Humanities, where he studied under Alexander Dvorkin. Today, he remains an active State Counselor of Justice of the Russian Federation (since 2008) and has served as the Presidential Plenipotentiary to the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation since January 31, 2020.

The intensified discrimination against Jehovah's Witnesses at the official level began in 2009, precisely when Dvorkin took charge of the Expert Council. Over the next eight years, the situation worsened for Jehovah's Witnesses, and by 2016, nine congregations had already been banned. The year 2016 became a turning point when the Ministry of Justice filed a lawsuit with the Supreme Court seeking to ban the activities of the Administrative Center of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia.

The court case concluded on April 20, 2017. The Supreme Court of Russia declared the activities of the Administrative Center of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia extremist, labeled all registered Jehovah's Witnesses legal entities — 395 regional branches — as extremist organizations, banned the center's operations, and confiscated its property. This marked the beginning of legitimized state repression, leading to the largest persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in the modern world. Followers of this religious organization have faced raids, searches, prison sentences, and inhumane torture that continue to this day, forcing many to flee Russia.

As a result, over the past eight years, the persecution, raids, arrests, and torture of Jehovah's Witnesses — and later, other peaceful organizations — have only intensified. Through the efforts of so-called "cult fighters" and their leader, Alexander Dvorkin, Russia, the successor to the former USSR, once a liberating nation, has become an oppressor. The country that once defeated Nazism has now become its successor.

Beyond Human Dignity

In the first two years following the ban on Jehovah's Witnesses, religious persecution spread across 36 regions of Russia. More than 400 searches were conducted, 70 criminal cases were initiated, and 169 believers were classified as either defendants or suspects. During this period, 82 people were held in custody, including in pretrial detention centers, while others were placed

under house arrest or travel restrictions. There were repeated searches and re-arrests. These are publicly available records from the first two years, starting in April 2017 [5]. Each year, the situation has only worsened — prison sentences have grown longer, and repression and torture have intensified.

Detailed accounts of some instances of torture are presented on the website of the Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre in an article titled “Witnesses and Executioners” [6].

Previously, the website actfiles.org repeatedly exposed crimes committed by modern anticult Nazis and their leader, Dvorkin, including those against Jehovah’s Witnesses. In addition to the factual information already presented on this platform and in this article, we considered it important to highlight the hidden side of these persecutions — the aspects that remain in the shadows of news reports, raids, arrests, published statistics, and the overall number of victims.

The website dedicated to an independent human rights project under the political prisoner support program of the Memorial Human Rights Defence Center has recorded testimonies from lawyers who defended Jehovah’s Witnesses. They witnessed the use of torture against their clients and numerous violations of their rights during the investigation process [5]. Below is just one of many examples:

Egiazar Chernikov, attorney for Jehovah’s Witnesses in Surgut

“All the investigators interrogated my clients. If their answers were deemed unsatisfactory, the investigators ordered the staff assigned to their office to escort them to the so-called torture room. These staff members’ role was merely to escort them to the torture rooms. The third and final role belonged to the executioners stationed at the far end of the first-floor corridor of the Investigative Committee building. That’s where these representatives of

authority were based; my clients were taken there, and that's where the torture took place.

...In the so-called far room, my clients, specifically Volosnikov, Boronos, Kim, Kairyak, Severinchik, Plekhov, and Loginov, were subjected to inhumane treatment and torture. They were forced to kneel against the wall with their arms raised while being struck forcefully on the head and various parts of their bodies. They were humiliated based on their religion, nationality, and other factors. They were beaten with blunt, solid objects on their ribs and heads. This torture room resembled a toilet room about 5 by 2 meters in size. A sink was located on the left side. They were made to stand against the doors of the stalls with their hands raised above their heads, had plastic bags put over their heads and taped around their necks to restrict oxygen flow. Their hands were bound behind their backs with tape, and then they were thrown to the floor, with their legs also taped together. In this helpless state, my clients were unable to defend themselves or take any action to reduce the threat to their lives. The officials beat them, shouted at them, and demanded authoritatively, 'You will give this testimony to the investigator, do you understand?! You will stop invoking Article 51, do you understand?! This is what you will say to the investigator!' This is how I convey the emotional atmosphere as it was recounted to me.

Even now, when I speak with them, some cannot talk without crying. Volosnikov said he inhaled the plastic bag and tried to bite through it just to get some air. At that moment, they poured water over him and delivered strong electric shocks to the groin areas. People writhed in pain, saying it felt as though their stomachs were flipping over and their entire bodies twisting from the agony. Three officers struck them standing above while extracting their testimonies. All of this was done as they were already suffocating. One of them said that just as he thought he was about to die, they allowed him to breathe. It can be said that those executioners were well-organized and highly

experienced in the application of torture. They even boasted, 'We've broken even worse terrorists than you.'

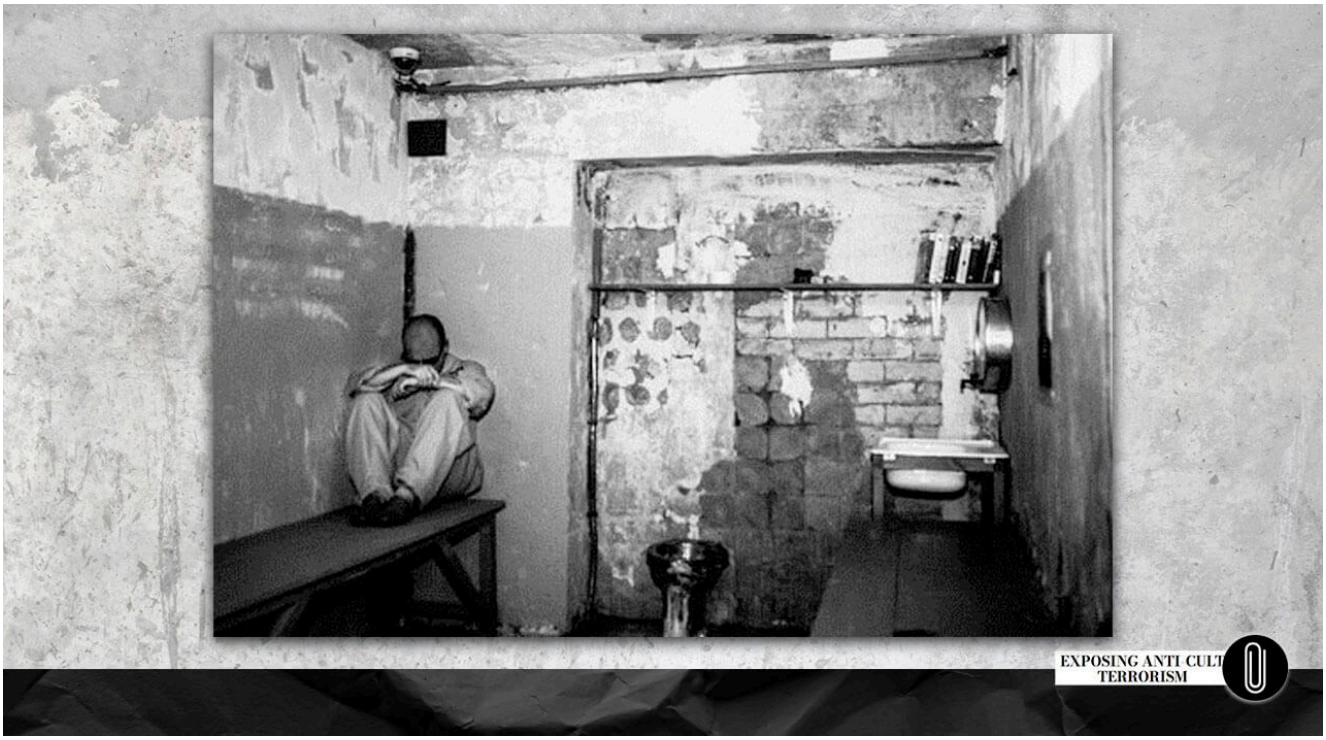
This situation was particularly cynical because once they obtained confessions, they wrote what the victim had agreed to on a clipboard. The moment the victim agreed, he was untied and taken to the investigator. The prepared responses, obtained through torture, were placed on the table in front of him. In the presence of the executioners, the investigator would then formally record them into the protocol. If my client objected to the wording, the investigator would order the executioners, and they would take him back for another round of torture.

Rysikov suffered two heart attacks. During his interrogation, the head of the investigative team, Tkach, said to him, 'Do you want to experience that again?' He perceived this threat seriously and lost consciousness. His wife also fainted, and an ambulance was called for her. This was a particularly difficult psychological situation for my clients."

It might seem that physical violence is the worst possible abuse. However, psychological and moral torture, carried out in specially created inhumane conditions, in prolonged isolation, lasting months or even years, has profoundly destructive consequences for individuals. It breaks a person from the inside so completely and irreversibly that, in many cases, they can never regain their previous mental balance, inner peace, or sense of a fulfilling life in society. Such individuals bear the burden of endless fear and a constant sense of insecurity, no matter where they are. Their fear extends not only to themselves but also to their loved ones, especially their children.

Below are excerpts from the account of a Jehovah's Witness who was arrested and spent two and a half months in a Russian pre-trial detention center before being placed under house arrest. In an interview with Radio Liberty, he requested anonymity. These excerpts detail his experience in detention; the

full story can be found in the original source — the article "'You're Acting Like Fascists': The Story of a Fleeing Jehovah's Witness".[7]



"YOU'RE A NOBODY WITHOUT A NAME" and your name means nothing.

"I saw the faces of people in prison, heard their conversations, and I can say with confidence: this system fosters anger and resentment toward the authorities. It encourages people to become even more sophisticated criminals.

It all starts with being moved everywhere in handcuffs before you're even convicted. They bring you to a temporary detention center, and as soon as you cross the door, you feel like you're no longer human. You're just… it's hard to find the right word… just a creature. You have no rights. You can't say anything. You can't defend yourself. It all starts with a humiliating strip search. You have to show everything, even lift your tongue and pull your cheeks. Of course, this is done while naked. These humiliating searches happen when you arrive at the temporary detention center, and then, when you're taken to

court, the same search happens again. This degrading treatment immediately strips away your sense of dignity. You're a nobody without a name."

"At first, I didn't even realize it was torture. I thought torture meant sticking needles under fingernails or burning the body with an iron. I didn't experience that. But the torture began on the first day of pretrial detention. They brought me straight to a punishment cell instead of a regular one. This was a semi-basement room, about one and a half by three meters. A bed, a sink, and an open toilet. There were two cameras filming me 24/7, and the lights were never turned off. There was a tiny little window — you can't even tell if it's day or night outside. They brought me in at night. In the morning, I realized what the first torture method would be. At 6 a.m. sharp, they blasted loud music coming from a crackly speaker installed in the vent.

The noise from this speaker was so loud and screeching in my tiny room that after an hour, my head felt like it would split open. They turned it off only at ten at night. This went on for 10–12 days — I don't remember exactly how many days I spent in this punishment room. After a few days, they began to take me to interrogations conducted by a police operations officer — that's their official title. His goal is to make a person talk, to convince him that he should cooperate, confess, take on some crimes, and so on. I was summoned to his comfortable office. At first, he was kind, then he started threatening me — it was like this constant back-and-forth between roles."

"...For a month, I had no idea what was happening to my family. I wasn't allowed to meet with my lawyer, and I wasn't given any books. I stayed in that cell for 10–12 days, and the music — it was killing me. Inspections were conducted two to four times a day. They would take me out into the corridor and subject me again to humiliating strip searches. I had to show them everything... every place... everywhere. Then they would take me back to my cell. I used to tell them, 'Do you realize you're acting just like fascists did to

people during the war? You're killing me with this music, don't you understand? Please, turn it down.' But they didn't pay any attention.

Later, I noticed that the music situation was different in other cells. For some, it was turned off, and for others, it was reduced to a comfortable volume. But in my isolation cell, it always played at full volume. Maybe they could see through the surveillance camera how much the loud music was tormenting me. I have this physiological sensitivity to noise. I think they did it on purpose; I can't explain it any other way.

The music would start at six in the morning sharp! There was no clock in there, but I eventually figured out that this was the schedule. Wake-up at 6 a.m., lights out at 10 p.m. That's how I kept track of time, knowing when a day ended and night began. For sixteen hours a day, that crackly speaker would blare at full volume in my tiny cell. To make things worse, I realized I had a phobia of enclosed spaces. I started feeling worse and worse. I started having inexplicable panic attacks and fears I'd never experienced before.Thoughts like, 'Everything's terrible, this confined space, what if there's a fire, I'm going to die.' Stuff like that. And I couldn't understand what was happening to me.

When these episodes started, it felt like my heart was being squeezed in a vise. I began having heart attacks periodically. Once, I felt so unwell that I tried banging on the door, calling for help — there was an intercom. But no one came, and no one helped me. Eventually, I passed out. When I regained consciousness, I realized I had apparently slid down the barred door and collapsed on the floor. I guess I tilted my head in a way that cut off my breathing. It felt like I was flying away somewhere. Then, when someone turned me over, I gasped for air and came to my senses. It was the woman who brought meals who found me. She opened the food slot in the door and saw that I wasn't there — I was lying on the floor. She called for help, someone flipped me over, and I started breathing again."

"I thought my torture would end there — with the loud music, for example. But I was wrong. They moved me to another cell. At first, I thought it was paradise compared to the isolation cell. It was a fairly large cell, and there were two other people with me. There was a large window. At first, I thought, 'How wonderful. Finally, I can see the sky.' In the evening, a little sunlight even streamed into the cell. But then I realized how cold it was in that cell.

There were two sets of bars — one on the inside, one on the outside — and no glass. There were no window frames, no glass at all. At night, the temperature outside dropped below freezing, as it was that time of year, with frosts lasting a week. I touched the radiator — it was turned off. When I looked closely at the walls, I saw they were damp. I touched them and the water dripped down like in a cave. Black mold covered the corners. As I later figured out, it was a corner cell. And most likely, they used it to force people to talk. Because the other guys in the cell with me were also taken out periodically and pressured to cooperate.

...At night, I realized that this form of torture was even worse than the sound torture. It was so cold that there was practically a blizzard inside the cell. There was nothing to cover ourselves with. Instead of a blanket, we had burlap sacks, and they were so thin you could see right through them. I put on everything I had. The other guys did the same. We each curled up tightly on our beds, trying to warm ourselves with our own breath. But it didn't help. The first three nights, we couldn't sleep at all because we were afraid we would freeze to death. The wind blew straight into the cell.
The first night passed, and when we were taken out into the corridor for inspection, we started begging the guards to give us something to cover the window because we were literally freezing. We were practically on our knees, pleading for help. We thought maybe they didn't realize what was happening to us. But they ignored our pleas and just shoved us back into the cell. And so we kept freezing. I truly understood how serious it was when I realized that

the only source of warmth was my own breath. I spent about two weeks in those conditions."

"This entire time in detention, I was tormented by claustrophobia. And you know, I remember the isolation ward — you go to the toilet, and a camera is recording you. How can you relieve yourself when someone is watching? It could be a woman watching — you don't know who is monitoring you. And this surveillance was constant, in every cell I was in. The lights were never turned off at night. You were always under observation. And it was horrifying.

This is justified by the claim that the Federal Penitentiary Service is fighting abuse. But in reality, it degrades human dignity so much that a person needs time to recover. And when I finally started to regain my senses while under house arrest, I began to realize what had happened to me. Honestly, I still need psychological help. I've asked for psychological help here — not just for myself, but for my whole family. We've become different people. Something inside us broke. All hope for justice has been crushed. And all these humiliations, of course, don't pass without leaving a mark."

"Once a week, they would take us to wash for 10–15 minutes in a communal shower. There wasn't even a showerhead — just a stream of water, and you had to quickly wash under it. That's what they called the 'bathhouse.' The name was certainly an exaggeration."

"...Then the heatwave arrived. It was already summer. They moved me to yet another cell. I stepped inside, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. This cell was terribly cramped — five people were already there, and I was the sixth. The cell was just three by six meters, including a toilet and a sink. It was unbearably tight. On top of that, it was suffocating and hot.

The cell was on the sunny side of the prison, with a plastic window that barely opened because of the bars. It could only be cracked open slightly. The cell was right across from the shower area,, so all the steam from the showers was

sucked into our cell through the ventilation. When I walked in, I saw the other inmates sitting in their underwear, fanning themselves with pieces of cardboard. Sweat was pouring off them as if they were in a sauna. The walls were damp again, but this time from the steam.

As soon as I entered, I could barely breathe because there was no oxygen at all. And also, all the guys were smoking right there in the cell. I don't smoke. I walked back and forth for half an hour, unable to sit down. The others couldn't understand what was happening to me, and I felt everything at once — fear, despair, and bitter amusement at how they continued to torment me. I spent the rest of my time in that unbearable heat, in that cell. There was no shower in the cell at all. We were suffocating from the heat. The only relief came at night, around three or four in the morning, when the steam from the showers finally cleared. I later realized they created that steam on purpose — to break people down and make them talk."

"...On August 3, they placed me under house arrest, where I remained for another seventy days."

HOUSE ARREST

"House arrest is a bracelet they put on your ankle. It's a device you connect to the network, and you can't move more than three or four meters away from it. If you go even slightly further, the sensor goes off, and the Federal Penitentiary Service records that I violated the terms of my house arrest."

"Three to four meters — it's not even one room, right?"

"Exactly. It was very difficult to avoid breaking this restriction. And I understood that any violation meant being sent back to pretrial detention, and after what I experienced there, I didn't want to go back. House arrest was still better than pretrial detention, at least because I was with my family. I wasn't allowed to communicate with anyone else — only my wife, child, and mother.

Later, my sister was granted permission to visit me. But I couldn't communicate with anyone else. I was under constant surveillance — wiretapping, video monitoring, and, of course, the ankle bracelet…"

"When I came out of prison, I saw how much my wife had aged. I saw the state my child was in — and I was in deep shock. It's hard to measure, comprehend, or process how much suffering our family has endured unless you've lived through it yourself."

*"**When I was in prison, I sometimes thought about the Witnesses who were tortured in Nazi Germany…** I had read many biographies of Jehovah's Witnesses describing their time in the camps. **They, too, were tormented with cold and heat, heat, and subjected to loud music to break their will and influence their minds**. So it was the same thing."*

"After the search, every time a car stopped near our house or we heard a knock at the neighbor's gate, we would wake up. Because we were constantly afraid. Afraid of another search, afraid of being sent back to pretrial detention, afraid of being separated again."

TWO LAST STRAWS

"At the Investigative Committee, my wife was given a hint — most likely, as we later realized, because she had once worked as an investigator herself — that she was about to be reclassified as a suspect. And possibly arrested. My wife is also one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Around the same time, for some reason, our daughter's school scheduled a conversation with a psychologist and a social worker for her. We consulted with friends and found out that this is often the first step toward removing a child from a family.

There is a law in Russia now: two conversations with a social worker and a psychologist. If they decide that a child's home environment poses a threat, it can lead to the child being taken from the family. Naturally, if a family, in the authorities' view, consists of two extremists — highly dangerous criminals — then the child is considered to be in danger. We realized we couldn't waste any time. These two events became the last straw."

"We had hoped since 2012 that common sense would eventually prevail in Russia. After all, Russia is a country striving for democratic values. A country seeking European integration, one that sees itself as a global leader. We believed it would sort this issue out. Especially since, not long before, President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin had stated that the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses was unlawful. That it was utter nonsense. That the situation needed to be addressed.

We waited, hoping that the president of Russia — who has both authority and power — would step in. Especially since he seemed to have wanted to. We thought the situation had to turn around. But that didn't happen. It worsened by the day, by the hour. My wife and I made the decision to leave the Russian Federation. We abandoned our home, our car. Everything inside the house. And with just one suitcase, we left to seek refuge in another country."

"How did you manage to leave the country, to cross the border?"

"Good people helped. And God helped. It was simply a miracle. That's why, to this day, I am the only one among those who were in pretrial detention and placed on the federal wanted list who managed to escape."

But not all prisoners of conscience managed to escape, and some did not even survive. One victim of Alexander Dvorkin, the present-day ideologist of Nazism, was a Jehovah's Witness — he died in prison some time ago due to torture and abuse. However, shortly before his death, he managed to send a poem to the outside world. Thanks to compassionate individuals, it eventually

reached us. We are publishing the original poem alongside its English translation.

So many lies and so much pain
We have experienced over years.
Nazism has come and is free again,
The anticult plague is already here.

They stigmatize me, but it hurts children,
My heart is wringing with regret,
For there is no one else on the planet
To save the kids from the anticult net,

From brutal bullying and anticult repression,
From the terrible dark of scumbags and dregs.
When your rights and opinions are under oppression,
You're considered worse than lice and rats.

"Cancer cell" is what RACIRS' dog calls you
Instead of a human you're worth being named.
It's a real hell that the rabid beast caused you,
And you have to suffer unbearable pain.

RACIRS' mass media bring so much fuss.
Their lies are everywhere, but the truth is brave:
If you're labeled a "cultist," you'll be an outcast,
If you don't want to be labeled, be a slave.

A slave to the system, a slave to death,
A slave to maniacs, inhumans and bums,

A slave to the Nazi succession and mess,
A slave to raging demons and scums.

Forget about truth, forget about freedom,
Forget about your honor and conscience, too.
Just stigmatize other people and hit them,
Arrange terror — that's all you should do.

That's the whole essence of RACIRS' nazism.
But for sure it's not gonna save you, pal.
The sword of Damocles hangs over your lifetime,
The anticult darkness is coming right now.

Dvorkin's adepts are furious and indignant,
Their ugly grimaces twist in the dark.
They bow to their fuhrer, evil and malignant,
And rush to fulfil his commands to attack.

Anticultists are always active and ready,
But evil is not the only one on the globe.
We do have a chance to throw off the fetters,
There is surely good and definitely hope.

Everyone has a flame of goodness inside.
Just kindle it now as much as you can.
Those who seek the truth and want things to be right
Will quench their thirst from a friendly hand.

Friends convey words of truth to each other,
For the power of words is great from the start.
The time has come to join one another
And follow the call of goodness and heart.

The original poem:

Как много лжи, как много боли
Мы испытали за года.
Пришел нацизм, нацизм на воле,
Здесь антикультова чума.

Клеймят меня — а больно детям,
И сердце сжалось от тоски.
Ведь больше некому на свете
Спасти детей от их сети.

От антикультовых гонений,
От тьмы подонков и чертей.
Когда живешь без прав, без мнений,
Ты — «хуже крыс» и «хуже вшей».

Не человек, а «клетка рака» —
Клеймил тебя РАЦИРСа пёс.
От этой бешеной собаки
Так много боли перенёс.

От СМИ РАЦИРСа нет покоя.
Их ложь пестрит, а правда в том:
Клеймо «сектант» — судьба изгоя,
Клейма не хочешь — будь рабом.

Рабом системы, рабом смерти,
Рабом маньяков, нелюдей,
Рабом нацистского преемства,
Рабом беснующих чертей.

Забудь про правду и свободу.
Про совесть тоже позабудь.
Клейми других людей народа.
Террор устрой — в этом вся суть.

Вся суть рацирского нацизма.
Но знай, что это не спасёт.
Дамоклов меч на твоей жизнью,
Тьма антикультова грядёт.

Адепты Дворкина взбесились
Во тьме уродливых гримас,
И низко фюреру склонились,
Чтоб воплотить его приказ.

Антикультисты наготове,
Но в мире есть не только зло.
Есть шанс посбрасывать оковы,
Надежда есть и есть добро.

Огонь добра теплится в каждом.
Ты разожги его сильней.
Те, кто сегодня правды жаждут,
Восполнят жажду от друзей.

Друзья несут друг другу слово,
Ведь сила слова велика.
Пришел момент идти по зову,
По зову сердца и добра.

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As we know, public consciousness is most vulnerable in regions regularly bombarded with mass media reports on violent crimes, unpunished bureaucracy of officials, civil servants, law enforcement agencies, the cunning of local criminals, or on “high-profile” cases, school shootings, and mass shootings.

ARTICLES

“Power, power comes first…” The article “Legalized Sadists. The Totalitarian Sect of Dvorkin” elaborates on one of the striking examples of modern totalitarianism — the activities of Alexander Dvorkin’s international totalitarian sect, which propagates Nazi ideologies of superiority. The piece describes Dvorkin’s

“But those who were poisoned in murder vans and gas chambers, those who were torn to shreds, those whose bodies were burned in the ovens of crematoria and whose ashes were strewn to the winds, appeal to the conscience of the world.

In September of this year, we received an archive of scanned documents via email, suggesting that in the 1970s, Alexander Dvorkin, Russia’s leading anticultist and president of RACIRS (the Russian Association of Centers for the Study of Religions and Sects), was

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